

**UTAH DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP MEETING
JANUARY 8, 2007**

Members Present

Corrections Representatives: Annabelle Evans, Conducting, Gary Blair, Colleen Gabbitas, Belle Brough, Andy Iacona, Jack Ford, Sandi Haslam

FOCUS Group Representatives: Marianne Johnstone, Terri Hurst, Stephanie Peterson, Russ Durler, Barbara Durler, DeRae Preston, Robyn Brickey, Katie Monroe

Special Guest / Speakers:

Jack Ford, Belle Brough, Gary Blair, Colleen Gabbitas

Welcome: Annabelle Evans

Minutes of Last Meeting: Approved

We will e-mail out the minutes from this meeting to all members, but in the future minutes will be posted on the DOC website so that all members and the public may have access to news and information being shared at this meeting.

Katie Monroe from the Rocky Mountain Innocence Center was introduced as a new member of the group. Colleen Gabbitas was also introduced to those members unacquainted with her and it was announced that she would now be heading up the Mini Focus meetings in the place of Jack Evans.

Jack Ford – Legislative Issues

The legislature begins in one week. There are many bills to be considered which are in draft form at the present time. The Walsh Act passed but details are not yet available. It specifies three levels of sex offenders. Two-thirds of our sex offender population falls into the highest rated category. We really can't afford to comply with the Walsh Act but the public will demand compliance so we will have to eventually be on board. There is a three-year period in which to come into compliance with the Walsh Act. If we come into compliance within the first year, there has been a fiscal incentive promised, but the amount has not been disclosed. The amount for sex offender treatment requested this year is double what it was last year.

House Bill #85: Modifies the code for reducing sentencing. Victims are very angry. This law will stop the practice of reducing sex offenders' sentences so that they will have to remain on the registry for the present requirement of ten years following completion of probation.

House Bill #86: Makes a capital offense of a second occurrence of specified sex crimes against children. Since this capital offense does not involve the taking of a life, it would require life without parole.

House Bills Pending, Not Yet Passed:

House Bill #231: The manufacture, use, or sale of drugs in parks and other specified public places, or in front of a minor will require a five year minimum sentence and will be bumped up one offense level.

Enticing minors over the internet by sexual predators will constitute a first-degree felony.

The penalty for homicide of a child (under 14 years, intentional) shall be a capital offense.

Certain specified sex crimes against children are being considered for increased penalties.

If a sex offender does not have a valid driver's license, they will be required to obtain and keep a current state I.D. that must be renewed each year.

Belle Brough – “The Ideal Prison”

The purpose of “The Ideal Prison” project is to examine all practices relating to inmates from the day they arrive at the prison until the day they are released. Belle’s office is currently receiving ideas and input and are pushing to start implementing some of them as soon as possible.

Through the services of YPREP offices, offenders can begin working on a parole plan much in advance of their release. We have hired one full time counselor and one 32-hour a week counselor to help with career preparation issues. Offenders will be able to get on the computer and make their own plan and meet with specialists.

There are many more employment resources we need. We want to hook employment programs directly with employers in the community.

We are trying to find a housing specialist.

We are trying to increase offender treatment to improve their success rate functioning in the community. If they are unable to earn money on the outside, they will not succeed.

Other suggestions that were offered with regard to the project were:

- 1) connecting the disabled with appropriate services, 2) develop a veteran outreach program, 3) re-examine the fine structure, 3) partner with Jiffy Lube to train inmates to service the department’s vehicles and give them a skill they can use to earn a living upon release, 4) inmates to train service animals, 5) Women may be taught how to do nails or reupholster DI furniture to supplement incomes on the outside. Additional suggestions may be e-mailed to Belle Brough at abrough@utah.com.

Next Mini Focus meeting will be held February 7, 2007 in the Lone Peak conference room at 10:00 a.m. E-mail Colleen Gabbitas at cgabbitas@utah.gov with any issues you have for discussion.

Gary Blair – Substance Abuse Treatment

Gary reported on the Conquest program. Inmates are referred to as “residents” to communicate more respect to them as individuals. The program being used originated in Texas and has proved to have the lowest recidivism rate of any program now being used in the country. One of the purposes of the program is to help residents to see things the way the outside community sees them. Gary presented the Conquest Mission Statement, Statement of Commitment, Member Commitment Statement and listed the various Life Skills classes that are offered. The practice of residents directly addressing negative behaviors with each other eliminates negative C-notes that the Board of Pardons will see. It also teaches residents how to constructively agree and disagree with each other.

Gary presented a Conquest organizational chart, which showed the structure of the Conquest program. Everyone in Conquest has a job for which they are paid. Residents are required to pay for their own workbooks to help them take “ownership” of their program.

Gary covered the following: Residents daily schedule, daily meetings, seminars/skills classes, group meetings, lead meetings, individual therapy, confrontation/mediation, large group meetings, special events, phases of progress, graduation, Life Skills classes, high school, Utah State University, other classes offered, statistical summary of Conquest participants, and the future of the Conquest program.

Suggested topics for the next Focus meeting were taken: 1) Meet and talk with new UDC Executive Director Tom Patterson 2) needs/treatment of aging inmates 3) diabetes program at Gunnison 4) wrap-up of legislative session, 5) screening for traumatic brain injuries. Please e-mail additional suggestions to Sandi Haslam (shaslam@utah.gov) or Annabelle Evans (annabelleevans@utah.gov).

Next Meeting:

The next FOCUS meeting will be held Monday, March 5, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the Region III Adult Probation & Parole office, 36 West Fremont Ave. (1100 South), Salt Lake City, Utah.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.